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### **Book review: Readings in Late Antiquity: A Sourcebook by M. Maas**

**Citation for published version:**

Kelly, G 2003, 'Book review: Readings in Late Antiquity: A Sourcebook by M. Maas', *The Journal of Roman Studies (JRS)*, vol. 93, pp. 408-409. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3184750>

**Digital Object Identifier (DOI):**

[10.2307/3184750](https://doi.org/10.2307/3184750)

**Link:**

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

**Document Version:**

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

**Published In:**

The Journal of Roman Studies (JRS)

**Publisher Rights Statement:**

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Readings in Late Antiquity: A Sourcebook by M. Maas

Review by: Gavin Kelly

*The Journal of Roman Studies*, Vol. 93 (2003), pp. 408-409

Published by: [Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3184750>

Accessed: 19/12/2013 04:42

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Section 4 focuses on the transformations of visual culture (iconographic and figurative) and Section 5 moves from Paul Zanker on the visual representation of traditional *paideia* to discussion of the rise of the icon and the image of Christ. All this leads to the 250 pages of catalogue that give decent pictures and up-to-date accounts of the many objects collected in the show. Obviously, as with all books of this type, the quality is uneven across numerous contributors — but in many cases it is first-rate and in many cases the bibliography is the most up-to-date one can find at present. Effectively, the volume will be indispensable to all studies of late antique Rome — whether historical, archaeological, or art historical — for many years to come in a way that elegantly salutes the land-mark nature of the exhibition out of which it grew.

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JÁŠ ELSNER

J. RASMUS BRANDT and O. STEEN, *IMPERIAL ART AS CHRISTIAN ART – CHRISTIAN ART AS IMPERIAL ART* (Acta ad archaeologiam et artium historiam pertinentia 15). Rome: Bardi Editore, 2001. Pp. 338, 213 illus. ISBN 88-85699-94-4. €65.00.

Despite the mouthful of a title and the fact that this book collects various papers in several languages which hardly hang together as a single enterprise, this volume (the result of a conference celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Norwegian Institute in Rome) has some excellent contributions. The book belongs to a real efflorescence of late antique productions by groups of scholars around the millennium — I am not sure why Late Antiquity is the current *Zeitgeist*, but to this book should be added the *Aurea Roma* catalogue and the latest volume of *Acta Hyperborea*. In the case of the conference which set in motion this volume, the cause was the outstanding contribution of Norwegian art historians to late antique studies — in particular (as the introduction tells us) Hans Peter L'Orange, Hjalmar Torp, and Per Jonas Nordhagen. It is a nice feature that both Torp and Nordhagen contribute pieces — the former another of his arguments for the early date of the Rotonda mosaics in Salonica (most scholars believe them to be sixth- rather than fourth-century) and the latter offering a discussion of the origins of the Byzantine domed church. All the three volumes mentioned mix highly specific pieces — discussions of a single object in detail — with larger historical and cultural reflections across several centuries. The result is that things do not entirely hang together and some of the single-object pieces seem redundant, unless one has a particular interest in for instance the Oratory of the Forty Martyrs in the Roman Forum, the Halberstadt Diptych, the Achilles Mosaic at Palencia, a terracotta plaque at Dumbarton Oaks, or the Sant' Ambrogio sarcophagus (all with up-to-date treatments here from K. Gulowsen, G. Brühl, B. Kiilerich, S. Sande, and O. Steen respectively). By contrast Federico Guidobaldi, Neils Hannestad, and Hans-Rudolf Meier offer good overviews respectively of the development of architecture, the legacy of imperial art, and the ruler portrait. I found the following particularly notable. Franz Alto Bauer's excellent discussion of urban ritual in Constantinople from Constantine to about 750, is imaginative, up-to-date, and extremely interesting for a very important topic. Dale Kinney revisits the complexities of the birth of the Christian basilica with her customary common sense and elegant intelligence. Sible de Blaauw provides an English discussion of the scholarly nightmare that is the Lateran *Fastigium* (Constantine's screen or canopy or arcade with statues at the 'cult deity's end' of his first temple to the Christian God) — this not only gives us the latest, but helps those who may shy from her earlier discussions variously in Dutch, Italian, and German! Thomas Mathews continues his expansion of his controversial project on early Christian art with a discussion and checklist of pre-Christian (i.e. pagan) panel icons: in my view this is a very fruitful direction in which to take the burgeoning literature on the icon. Altogether, this is a very worthwhile collection, which should certainly be in every library.

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M. MAAS, *READINGS IN LATE ANTIQUITY: A SOURCEBOOK*. London/New York: Routledge, 2000. Pp. lxxviii + 375, 17 maps. ISBN 0-415-15987-3 (bound); 0-415-15988-1 (paper). £60.00 (bound); £19.99 (paper).

Michael Maas' sourcebook bears the imprimatur of Peter Brown, and the 'Late Antiquity' it covers is roughly coterminous with Brown's: 'the period stretching roughly from the reforms of Diocletian at the end of the third century to the rise of Islam in the seventh . . . covering a swath across Europe and the Middle East' (li). With linguistic, political, and cultural diversity increasingly visible, Late Antiquity is not obviously a period in itself; indeed the value of the concept — and of this collection — should be in cutting across lazy periodization.

Representing Late Antiquity in all its variety is the particular challenge and justification for M.'s collection. He offers translations (mostly by others) from Greek, Latin, Syriac, Arabic,

Hebrew, Persian, Coptic, and Armenian. A wide-ranging introductory chapter on the Roman Empire is followed by chapters on the Roman army, Christianity, polytheism, Jews, women, medicine, and philosophy, and the book is rounded off with neighbours and successors of the Roman Empire: Persia, the Germanic peoples, the Steppe peoples and Slavs, and Islam. Alongside old favourites, M. has included some little-known passages and others more referred to than read. Thus in the chapter on Christianity, M. passes an important test with the inclusion of Constantine's law enabling bishops to act as judges (*CTh* 1.27.1), and does not shun theology (Arius, the Nicene Creed, Nestorius, Pelagius, the *Henotikon* of Zeno). He admits to the section on asceticism not only Antony of Egypt and Simeon Stylites but also Romanos Melodos on the difficulties of monastic life. Passages such as Gregory the Great refusing to allow the empress Constantina the head of St Paul, or the Piacenza Pilgrim's wide-eyed journey through the Holy Land, help make the book enlivening and enjoyable reading.

There are of course biases. So many more Christian sources on paganism are available than vice versa, and M. does not really redress the balance. The pagans who stand out are those with obvious views, Libanius and Symmachus, rather than those who compromised or who are harder to read. So none of Ammianus' innocent-looking sarcasm on the cult of the martyrs. Regrettably, Claudian appears nowhere.

As wide a range of texts as these requires detailed contexts if the targeted undergraduate reader is not to lose himself. M. does not oblige. Most texts have only the briefest introductions, and they are occasionally in serious error, as when Constantius II's army on campaign against the Limigantes is introduced as Julian's against the Germans. M. glosses only sporadically within the texts and rarely comments on their authority or veracity. He has no comment when Theophanes refers in passing to Mohammad's murder (355), nor when a martyr's defiance is reported to the Augusti Diocletian and Maximian and Caesars Constantine and Licinius (97–8). The specific problem with this date is not addressed; nor are the wider problems of the truth-value of martyr-texts. An attempt to work out the date from M.'s chronological tables would founder on the absence of Maximian and Licinius *inter alios* from the list of emperors (which continues until A.D. 811, well over a century beyond the last events mentioned in the book).

Chronology is the area of greatest weakness. Individual sections dart forward and back in time. Regnal numbers are often lacking. Too often M. fails to date or locate events, so for example Heraclius' restoration of the True Cross to Jerusalem (probably A.D. 630) is twice left undated (145, 296–7). Many dates are wrong: Julian was in Gaul from A.D. 355–61 rather than just 357–9; A.D. 384 is the year when Symmachus petitioned for the Altar of Victory's return to the Curia, not that of its removal, which was 382 (lv); Isidore of Seville died in A.D. 636 not 566 (lvii); the Battle of Adrianople was in A.D. 378 not 376 (69); Synesius' *de regno* is probably from the late A.D. 390s, not 482 (82); Constantius could not have issued a law in A.D. 368, having died in 361 (89), nor Gratian in A.D. 386 (139, cf. 177); Ambrose became Bishop of Milan in A.D. 374 not 373 (113); Fabia Paulina died after A.D. 384 not after 344 (172), Bishop Zachariah of Mytilene after A.D. 536, not after 356 (178), Alexander of Tralles in A.D. 605 not 625 (252); the Neo-Platonist Marinus must have died later than A.D. 485 (270); the second year of Tiberius Caesar is A.D. 575–6, not 583 (331). I found numerous other typos, inconsistencies in bibliographical presentation and orthography (e.g. Nicea/Nicaea), and too little cross-referencing. M. uses a dismal English version of Rutilius Namatianus which interpolates a line absent from the Latin (23); other translations have been wrongly transcribed. Random checks find M.'s own translations decent.

Such levels of inaccuracy are shocking in a sourcebook. Indeed in the introduction M. calls his work a 'Reader' instead, an inconsistency typical of the lack of editing. Whatever its designation, this book cannot be recommended until its embarrassed publishers produce a substantially corrected edition.

Peterhouse, Cambridge

GAVIN KELLY

R. REES, *LAYERS OF LOYALTY IN LATIN PANEGYRIC AD 289–307*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. Pp. xviii + 237, 5 pls, 1 map. ISBN 0-19-924918-0. £40.00.

Derived from a doctoral thesis completed in 1997, this monograph is the first specific treatment of the five Latin panegyrics delivered between A.D. 289 and 307 and the first in English on the Latin Panegyrics. After an Introduction (1–26), Rees devotes five chapters to the five panegyrics he considers in detail, X(2) (27–67), XI (3) (68–94), VIII (4) (95–129), IX (5) (130–52), VII (6) (153–84); a Conclusion (185–92), an Appendix on the authorship of X(2) and XI(3) (193–204), the References (205–18), an Index Locorum (219–30), and Index (231–7) complete the volume.

R.'s main purpose is 'an appraisal of the relationships between the texts and the circumstances of their delivery' (vii). His emphasis on five speeches is a valid approach, but one that limits a little the universality of the monograph's conclusions. To take just a couple of examples, R. discusses the